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NEWS
WORTH
SHARING.

'We'd be just as happy to have a green Christmas'

After one of the worst winters ever, city's winter works manager concedes this December much better than last one **PAGE 3**

Weed still drug of choice for Canadian army

Report based on the Force's latest blind drug testing finds that cocaine is gaining in popularity **PAGE 9**

Metro columnist says thank you to 2014, for ...

... redefining the conversations we as a culture have about sexual assault and violence against women **PAGE 17**

HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE INTERVIEW

METRO FILM CRITIC FINDS HUMOUR WHERE TERRORIST HACKERS AND SONY PICTURES COULD NOT **PAGE 19**



'They're rallying behind this girl'

Cole Harbour.

Auction raises funds for shooting victim



HALEY
RYAN

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Dozens of people walked along a table full of artwork, gift cards and other items or paused to look at posters full of photos of a smiling young woman.

More than 70 people gathered at the Eastern Passage Legion Sunday afternoon for a fundraising auction to support Ashley MacLean Kears, an 18-year-old Cole Harbour girl who was shot during a home invasion three weeks ago and remains in hospital paralyzed from the chest down.

"The outpouring's been astronomical," said organizer and family friend Todd Inglis, adding the big-ticket items included a car-maintenance package worth \$2,000 and autographs of hockey legends Patrick Roy and Maurice Richard. "They're rallying behind this girl like one of their own."

Quoted

"Ashley's a very tough girl and she's going to come out of this OK."

Todd Inglis, family friend and organizer of Sunday's benefit

Inglis said MacLean Kears's family has set up a crowdfunding page and raised about \$13,100 so far but they will need hundreds of thousands of dollars for things like home care, a hospital bed, new home that is wheelchair accessible and adapted van.

According to police, four males who were wearing bandanas forced their way into 52 Arklow Drive on Nov. 30 and opened fire.

Three 17-year-old male youths and an 18-year-old man face multiple charges including counts of attempted murder and robbery.

"I was blown away," Inglis said about when he first heard of the shooting.

"It was a useless act."

Ben Brown, a national wheelchair athlete from Kings County, spoke to the crowd of his experiences losing the use



Ashley MacLean Kears FACEBOOK

of his legs eight years ago, and the huge amount of community support and opportunities he's found since then.

Brown recalled lying in the hospital bed and wondering what his life would be like, and worrying about never working again and being stuck at home.

"It's all up in here," he said, tapping his head. "Hopefully we can all come together and help Ashley out, not just start from the bottom but help her reach to the top and reach new goals."

MacLean Kears will be in the hospital for "a while," Inglis said, and although she has good and bad days she is "super, super strong."

"She's inspiring a lot of people because she's one tough kid," Inglis said.



Todd Inglis speaks to reporters at the Eastern Passage Legion prior to the start of a fundraising auction for shooting victim Ashley MacLean Kears on Sunday. JEFF HARPER/METRO



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Halifax guns for green after one of 'worst winters' ever

Year later. City's winter works manager concedes this December much better than last one



HALEY
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Darrin Natalino is keeping his fingers crossed for a green Christmas this year.

But Natalino, the superintendent of Halifax's winter works program, is no Grinch.

He said he's simply enjoying our snow-free weather compared to the situation last December, when the city was being hit by multiple storms and saw 70 centimetres of snow during the month.

"Last year this time we were literally in the throes of what turned out to be one of the worst winters we've had," Natalino said.

"I'm looking outside right now and the sun is shining, and last year at this very moment we were getting pelted with 25 centimetres of snow that turned to rain and ice pellets."

With all of the ice forming under heavy loads of snow, causing treacherous roads and lots of overtime for the crew, Natalino said he definitely doesn't miss all of the comments from angry drivers sitting in traffic and long nights.

"I don't want last year to happen again, but I think as a whole and as a team we did a great job last year



A passenger pushes a car in a parking lot in Halifax in December 2013 during one of the many storms to hit the city. ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Luckily enough, every forecasted system has kind of just passed us or has fallen as rain."

Darrin Natalino, winter works manager for Halifax

dealing with the crummy circumstances," he said.

Although Halifax has had a far rainier December this year, Natalino said, his de-

partment is never able to sit around the office and take it easy.

Natalino said his team has been "on alert" and dealt with washed-out roads after heavy rains, and responded to seven or eight events where rapid icing or flurries were a possibility.

HRM's snow removal budget rose to \$20 million last year from \$17.8 million in 2012, mostly to accommodate the cost of sidewalk clearing on the peninsula.

In numbers

\$7M

How much Halifax's winter works department spent last December.

By this time last year, Natalino said, the department had shelled out millions in cleanup costs and overtime, but has hardly had to touch any of the budget so far this season —

and there's been very little overtime calimed.

The people in his department do love getting a "rush" out of snowstorms and big weather events because that's part of the job, Natalino said, but now that Christmas is only days away no one is "dreaming of a white Christmas."

"I think we'd be just as happy to have a green Christmas, and come January, February ... let the skies open up," he said.

1 NEWS

All I Want
for
Christmas



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Volunteers, cops remind public to beware of holiday Grinches

Secure your valuables. Vehicle thefts an unfortunate part of Christmas season

BRAEDON CLARK

halifax@metronews.ca

As Brian Leslie made his way through the parking lot, he stopped and pointed into a car. There, in plain sight, was a credit card.

"That's what we're trying to avoid," he said. "You don't want to leave that sort of thing out in the open."

In his bright yellow jacket with the words "Citizen on Patrol" emblazoned on the back, Leslie and the other volunteers at a strip mall in Cole Harbour on Saturday weren't hard to spot.

They were there as part of Operation Hawkeye, an RCMP-led initiative designed

to remind people of the importance of securing valuables during the holiday season.

Leslie, Ted William and several other volunteers had already been to Eastern Passage that morning, which Leslie described as a hot spot.

"There have been a lot of thefts down there, so it was definitely an area we wanted to be at," he said as he slipped a flyer under another set of wipers.

By Leslie and William's reckoning, this was the third or fourth year they had volunteered their time to hand out flyers around Christmas. It was simply something they felt they should do, because getting robbed at this time of

year is a heavy blow.

"It is also great to see the many volunteers helping out today," RCMP Const. Brenda Elson said in a statement.

Of course, not everyone follows the advice that Leslie, William and the RCMP are dispensing. For one thing, whoever owned that credit card, so tantalizingly available in the cup holder.

For another — me, who returned to my car to find my wallet sitting in plain sight and a camera lens lying in the open on the front seat. I slid the flyer out from under my wipers and sheepishly got into my car.

Hopefully everyone else takes the advice to heart better than I did.



Brian Leslie reminds motorists to secure their valuables during the holiday season in Cole Harbour on Saturday.

BRAEDON CLARK/FOR METRO

Operation Hawkeye

"Our volunteers want to help and they are eager to get the message out that it really is a preventable crime."

RCMP Const. Brenda Elson

Police arrest suspect in October assault on transit bus

Police have arrested a man wanted in an attack that took place on a Halifax Transit bus in late October.

According to Halifax Regional Police, officers responded to an assault in

progress on the Route 2 Wedgewood bus travelling to the Lacewood Terminal around 7:30 p.m. Oct. 29.

The driver noticed a commotion at the rear of the bus and pulled over at the corner

of Bayers Road and Desmond Avenue to call police.

A 50-year-old man told responding officers he boarded the bus near the Halifax Shopping Centre and asked a man sitting behind him to

turn down the music coming from his earphones.

The man apparently became angry and hit the victim several times in the face.

When the bus driver pulled over, the suspect got

off the bus and was last seen running on Desmond Avenue.

On Thursday, police released images of the suspect with the hopes the public could identify him.

On Friday at 4 p.m., police say the 29-year-old man turned himself in to police. He was arrested and is now due in provincial court at a later date to face a charge of assault. **METRO**

WASTE COLLECTION NOTICE GARBAGE/ORGANICS/RECYCLABLES

Christmas Day

Please be advised that there will be no garbage, organics or recyclables collection services on Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25th, 2014. Collection services for that day will be provided the following Saturday, December 27th. Regular waste collection services will occur on Boxing Day.

Collection Services can begin as early as 7am. To ensure collection please place materials curbside the evening prior to collection day.

No Collection Christmas Day Thursday, December 25th	➔	Collection will occur the following Saturday, December 27th
Otter Lake Facility Closed Thursday, December 25th & Sunday, December 28th	➔	Otter Lake Facility Open Wednesday, December 24th & Wednesday, December 31st, 7am – 6pm
HRM Recycling Plant Closed Thursday, December 25th	➔	HRM Recycling Plant Open December 24th & 26th, 7:30am – 6pm
Household Special Waste Depot Closed Saturday, December 27th	➔	Household Special Waste Depot Open Saturday, December 20th, 9am – 4pm

Do the math: Three more shopping days

Days are short. A guide to what's open and what's closed in Halifax during Christmas week

RUTH DAVENPORT
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Whatever Christmas shopping you have left, you have about three more days to get it done.

Malls, grocery stores and Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation outlets will all shut down at 5 p.m. Wednesday for a two-day Christmas break.

Most grocery stores are on extended hours until then, either open 24 hours or from early morning until midnight. NSLC outlets will be open on regular hours, listed on the NSLC's website,



Halifax Shopping Centre
JEFF HARPER/METRO

until 5 p.m. Wednesday.

The Halifax Shopping Centre and Mic Mac Mall will both be open from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday.

Most drug stores will also be closed on Christmas Day, but will be open on Boxing Day.

Boxing Day sales will take place on Saturday, Dec. 27, and both malls will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Dec. 28.

They will also be open for reduced hours on New Year's Eve and closed on New Year's Day.

Under provincial legislation, most retail businesses must close on Christmas, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

The city is also advising residents that solid waste pickup will not occur on Thursday, Dec. 25, but will be postponed until Saturday, Dec. 27.

Collection of garbage, green bins and recycling will also be delayed from Thursday, Jan. 1, until Saturday, Jan. 3.

Transit users should also visit halifax.ca/transit to see how the holiday schedule will affect bus and ferry service over the Christmas break.



Holiday relief at the pump

The price of gas in Halifax continued its dramatic fall, inching below \$1 per litre on Friday for the first time in over four years. The new regulated price is now 97.5 cents for regular self-serve at most Halifax stations — a drop of just over four cents from last week's total.

BRAEDON CLARK/FOR METRO

Lower Sackville

Allegation of pointed gun

A man is in custody after a woman allegedly had a gun pointed at her on Saturday morning in Lower Sackville. Halifax District RCMP arrived to a home on Sackville Cross Road at 11 a.m. and eventually arrested a 40-year-old man after surrounding the residence and closing down the road for a short period of time. **METRO**

Buddy Daye Street

Woman sought after stabbing

A 36-year-old woman was hospitalized after being stabbed in Halifax on Friday afternoon. Halifax Regional Police say the stabbing happened just before 12:30 p.m. in the 5500 block of Buddy Daye Street.

The victim, according to police, was stabbed by a 36-year-old woman that she knew. The suspect left the area before police arrived and investigators are trying to track her down. **METRO**



Capital Health Walk-in Services HOLIDAY HOURS

CAPITAL HEALTH WISHES YOU A HEALTHY, HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON.

To prepare for your health needs please note the following holiday service changes:

Walk-in blood collection services and walk-in x-ray services at most Capital Health sites will close at noon Dec. 24 and will re-open for regularly scheduled hours Dec. 29.

FOR EXCEPTIONS AND MORE DETAILS, please visit www.cdha.nshealth.ca and click the 'Holiday Hours' banner.

If you have urgent blood collection or x-ray needs, please contact your family doctor.

Remember to think about your health needs before the holidays:

- Make sure your prescriptions are filled.
- Be careful not to overdo it shovelling snow.
- Enjoy holiday cheer in moderation.
- If you have an ongoing medical condition, think about your needs and have them taken care of before the holidays.

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Police probe motel gunshot sounds

Halifax Regional Police are investigating a report of gun shots early Saturday morning at the Stardust Motel in Bedford.

Police were called at 3:10 a.m. by a tenant who said he heard what he thought were gunshots at about 2 a.m.

When the tenant was outside he saw what looked like a

Investigation

There is no indication that anyone was injured and police continue to investigate.

bullet hole in one of the doors of the hotel.

METRO



The Stardust motel in Bedford. BRAEDON CLARK/FOR METRO

Accused in Ponzi scheme home during holidays

Windsor man gets bail. He was recently extradited from the Republic of Panama to face charges

Court date

Quintin Earl Sponagle is due back in court on Feb. 24, 2015.

A former Windsor-based businessman believed to be the mastermind of an alleged Ponzi scheme said to have cheated 179 investors out of more than \$4 million will be home for the holidays for the first time in a long time.

Quintin Earl Sponagle, 50, learned he would be released from custody on a list of recognizance conditions in Windsor provincial court on Friday.

Crown attorney Rick Hartlen and Sponagle's lawyer, Derek Brett, reached an agreement regarding the release conditions.

Sureties Kevin and Paula Walsh, a Falmouth couple, are responsible for a \$25,000 bond required for Sponagle's release.

"You're in control of him," Judge Alan Tufts advised the sureties. Sponagle must reside at a fixed address in Upper Vaughan, follow a 10 p.m.-to-6 a.m. curfew, remain in Hants County unless authorized to leave for work or medical purposes, keep the peace and attend court throughout his pre-trial release.

In addition, Sponagle must report in person three days a week and report using a dedicated landline registered to the Upper Vaughan address two days a week.

Sponagle is prohibited from having a passport for any country, possessing a firearm or prohibited weapon, or engaging in the selling, trading and advising of investments, securities or any other financial instrument.

In addition, he must prove he is complying with the imposed curfew by answering the door of the Upper Vaughan residence within three minutes when a peace officer visits and answering the designated landline.

Tufts granted the Crown's request for a reverse onus bail hearing — a process in which the defendant must prove his pre-trial release from custody is justified — on Dec. 16. The lawyers reached a release agreement before evidence was presented at the continuation of the bail hearing Friday.

Sponagle was recently extradited from the Republic of Panama, where he is believed to have resided since 2006, to face three counts of fraud over \$5,000 and one charge of theft over \$5,000.

RCMP say Sponagle, former head of the Windsor-based Jabez Financial Services Inc., fled to Central America knowing full well his business was under investigation by the Nova Scotia Securities Commission. **HANTS JOURNAL**

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Quintin Earl Sponagle is escorted out of Windsor provincial court in this file photo. HANTS JOURNAL

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Protesters want dental students' expulsion for online sexual posts

Dalhousie University. Hundreds march in solidarity of women allegedly targeted by Facebook messages

BRAEDON CLARK

halifax@metronews.ca

About 200 people gathered in front of Dalhousie's School of Dentistry on Friday to protest how the university has handled a growing controversy surrounding sexually explicit Facebook posts allegedly made by 13 members of the school.

The protesters, many holding signs reading "Dalhousie hates women," marched from the School of Dentistry to the Henry Hicks building. Many wore masks to express their belief that victims of sexualized violence must remain anonymous for their own safety.

According to the CBC,



Protesters voice opposition to the decision of Dalhousie University president Richard Florizone not to immediately expel 13 dentistry students allegedly involved in a controversy over sexually explicit Facebook posts. BRAEDON CLARK/FOR METRO

members of the Class of DDS Gentlemen page on Facebook voted on which woman they would like to have "hate" sex with and joked about using chloroform on women.

While Jackie Stevens of the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, the organization behind the

protest, lauded Dalhousie for its efforts in tackling the issue, others weren't so forgiving.

"Expel them!" someone yelled from the crowd, drawing a huge cheer.

"We are here to show solidarity and support for the women who were targeted by

their colleagues in the School of Dentistry," Stevens said into a megaphone.

Last Wednesday, Dalhousie president Richard Florizone announced that the university, in consultation with women involved in the case, would follow a process of restorative

Quoted

"We encourage the university to address this issue on all levels to ensure it doesn't happen again."

Jackie Stevens of Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

justice, which involves the two sides coming to an agreement on appropriate punishment.

Florizone also said that the men in question, who are due to graduate in the spring, will not graduate until the issue has been resolved.

The punishment could still be expulsion, but many in the crowd on Friday were unhappy that the men in question weren't expelled immediately.

"It's very disappointing," said Sandra Reid. "To take this route seems to suggest that the university is condoning this behaviour in some way."

'Re-victimization'

Dalhousie must send a message, expert says

Wayne MacKay, a law professor at Dalhousie University and an expert on cyberbullying, said the school needs to pay attention to whether the parties involved are satisfied with the process of restorative justice while avoiding re-victimization of the women.

MacKay said he supports restorative justice in some cases, but says in the United States it has not always satisfied complainants.

"It does give them a lot of control ... but with that control comes a lot of pressure and in some ways the potential for re-victimization," he said. "The message has to be clearly sent that this is taken seriously that this kind of conduct is not acceptable and will not be tolerated and whatever process they're using, that message has to be out there." **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

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\$67M. Pratt & Whitney plans upgrade to facility

Aerospace firm Pratt & Whitney Canada is planning a \$67-million investment over the next six years at its manufacturing facility near the Halifax airport.

The Nova Scotia government says it will provide up to 20 per cent or \$13.4 million of the costs of the project.

A spokeswoman for the government says the subsidy will only be provided after the company makes its investment.

The company says the investment will allow it to build components of its new PurePower PW800 engines and up-

Since '85

Pratt & Whitney Canada, a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp., established its Enfield facility in 1985.

grade its engine-blade manufacturing facility.

The government says the plant employs about 350 full-time staff and puts about \$25 million per year into Nova Scotia's economy.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

\$6.5M. Lockheed Martin given payroll rebates

The Nova Scotia government is spending up to \$6.5 million over seven years in payroll rebates for Lockheed Martin Canada.

The government says the company will be required to maintain 200 positions at its Halifax offices and is being encouraged to create 70 more jobs.

Earlier this year, Lockheed Martin signed a four-year, \$180-million contract with the New Zealand government to update two of its frigates.

Nova Scotia Business Inc. says all of the software and engineering work required for that contract will be done at Lockheed Martin Canada's Halifax offices. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dartmouth

Bus driver who hit pedestrian ticketed

A Halifax Transit bus driver has been ticketed after a 22-year-old woman was hit by a bus in Dartmouth last week.

The woman was hit at the intersection of Portland

Street and the exit to the Portland Hills Terminal just before 7 a.m. on Friday.

She was transported to hospital by EHS with non-life threatening injuries. The 43-year-old bus driver was issued a \$693.95 ticket for failing to yield to a pedestrian in a sidewalk. The ticket also comes with four demerit points upon conviction. METRO



Canadian Forces members march past the camera at the National War Memorial last year in Ottawa. METRO FILE

Slight rise in army pot use, tests show

Blind testing. Figures show marijuana still preferred drug, but cocaine gaining ground

do drugs.

The findings, contained in a 42-page report obtained by The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act, included testing for 11 controlled substances at 26 Armed Forces units across the country. There were 4,198 participants from most ranks and age groups.

The testing found that 279 urine specimens — or 6.6 per cent — tested positive for at least one drug, with pot detected in 5.3 per cent of all of the samples. That's up from the 4.2 per cent in 2012 and 4.8 per cent the year before that.

Positive test results for marijuana came from 19 units, with the bulk from 3 Royal

Canadian Regiment and 2 Service Battalion in Petawawa, Ont.

The report says nine units had cocaine-positive samples, with the most again from members in 3 Royal Canadian Regiment in Petawawa. Results showed 44 samples overall had traces of cocaine, up from the 29 positive samples the previous year, making it one of the higher rates since the testing started in 2007.

While the numbers were considered low, members of the psychosocial health dynamics team who wrote the report said there was a higher likelihood that members tested positive for cocaine in 2013 than in 2009.

"There was a significant difference for the proportion of cocaine-positive samples, such that 2013 blind drug testing participants were significantly more likely to test positive for cocaine than those tested in 2009," the report states.

The Canadian Forces has a zero-tolerance policy for illicit drugs and conducts testing to gather data to guide its Drug Control Program. No one from the Defence Department was available for an interview on the report, but a spokeswoman said in an email that "the results are not used for disciplinary purposes as no urine sample can be attributed to a specific member."

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Albertans charged in death

First-degree murder charges. Body of Patrick Whidden was found in a field on December 14

Police have arrested and charged two Alberta men with the murder of a 25-year-old Nova Scotia man.

Alberta RCMP arrested two 20-year-olds — Robert Parkin of Parkland County and Santiago Patterson of Mayerthorpe — last Wednesday.

Both men face charges of first-degree murder and indignity to human remains in connection with the death of Patrick Whidden, who is originally from Wolfville, N.S.

Cause of death

An autopsy has been conducted, but police have not released the cause of death.

Whidden's body was found in a field outside of Peers, near Edson, Alta. on Dec. 14 — a week after he

was reported missing from the nearby community, approximately 200 kilometres west of Edmonton.

Parkin and Patterson will remain in custody until a scheduled court appearance on Jan. 6 in Edson court.

According to media reports, the victim had been living in Alberta for about six years.

KING'S COUNTY REGISTER



Patrick Whidden originally hailed from Wolfville, N.S. COURTESY RCMP

Valley View. Cops ID man who died during arrest

Police have identified a 49-year-old man who died as he was being arrested at a special-care home last week in northeastern Nova Scotia.

Joseph Gardner Feltmate of Riverton, N.S., died at the scene as an RCMP officer placed him under arrest for alleged assaults of employees at the Valley View Villa.

Police say the man became unresponsive during his arrest but have declined to provide further details.

The matter is being investigated by the province's Serious Incident Response Team. The watchdog agency has said the RCMP officer was attempting to arrest Feltmate under the provisions of the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act.

Ron MacDonald, the agency's director, has declined to comment on what level of force was used, as that will be part of the investigation. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Highway 6. Head-on crash sends three to hospital

RCMP say three people were taken to hospital after a head-on collision in the Pictou, N.S. area.

Police say the vehicles were travelling on Highway 6 around 5:30 p.m. Friday in Three Brooks, when they collided. They say a third vehicle went off the road after swerving to avoid the collision, but the driver was not injured.

Police say a 75-year-old man,

Conditions

Mounties say the highway was slippery with snow at the time of the crash.

a woman in her mid-20s and a 13-year-old boy were taken to hospital with injuries that range from minor to serious.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

House fire

All you want for Christmas is a smoke detector

Stephen Boland has revised his Christmas shopping list to only two words: smoke detector.

After barely escaping a devastating fire this month that put him and his wife Tammy in the hospital, Boland said he will not only be giving everyone on his list a smoke detector, but he will also be installing them.

"Working smoke detectors saved our lives," he said, his voice breaking with emotion.

"My brothers, my sisters, my parents, my wife's par-

ents, different relatives and friends — everyone will be getting a new smoke detector this year.

"You really don't appreciate them until it's too late."

Deputy Fire Marshal Doug MacKenzie said the fire was electrical in nature, caused by the lights on the couple's artificial Christmas tree.

The fire at the Boland home in Glace Bay started at about 1 a.m. on Dec. 11.

MacKenzie said it's important that people turn off their lights when going to bed but added that people should also ensure not to plug too much into their cords and that the cords aren't frayed.

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"Please, Mom? Can't we stop? Please?"

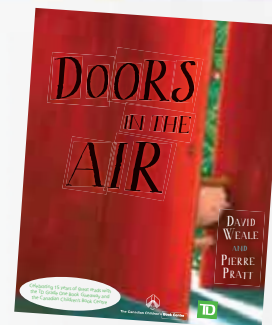
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Handgun incident

Canadian man
shot by U.S.
border guards

The U.S. border agency says a Canadian man was shot after allegedly pointing a handgun

at guards at the Ambassador Bridge between Windsor, Ont., and Detroit.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection says he stopped his car near the U.S. inspection booth at 3 a.m. Sunday and walked toward border officers while waving a gun. It says the officers ordered him to drop

the weapon but he pointed it their direction, prompting them to open fire.

The agency says the man, whom it hasn't identified, was treated and released from hospital before being taken into custody.

It says the man has had "previous encounters" with

Canadian law enforcement.

The statement says border and Department of Homeland Security officials are investigating along with Detroit police.

Windsor police say the man was seen waving a handgun in the parking lot of a local McDonald's some 20

minutes before the incident at the border crossing.

They say that when police arrived he was ordered to drop the weapon but refused, and then pointed the gun at officers, who were not aware of what was happening as they were busy dealing with passersby behind the man.

According to the police statement, the man then asked officers, "Why haven't you shot me yet?" and that officers tried to talk him down. Police say the man then got back into his SUV and drove off before officers could get back to their cruisers.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nutrition North: What went wrong?

Food security in the North. Many have expressed concern that businesses are not passing Nutrition North subsidy to consumers

For years, northerners have complained about Nutrition North to anyone who would listen, grumbling that the \$60-million annual federal food subsidy was doing little to ease their staggering grocery costs.

No one, it seemed, took much notice.

That all changed last month, when auditor general Michael Ferguson revealed that the program's overseers are largely in the dark about whether the subsidy is doing anything for the people who need it the most.

One of Ferguson's observations in particular struck a nerve with some northerners: that some retailers are cashing in on the subsidy.

"The stores are making money based on the amount of food they're bringing in, and in return they're supposed to lower their food price," said Leese Papatie, who helped organize Nunavut-wide food price protests. "In upper, High Arctic communities, the subsidy is higher than the freight cost. So they're making money like that."

Quoted

"What you're doing is you're putting the subsidy in the hands of the businesses. If you're in business to make a profit, are you going to be that willing to have good will?"

Ron Elliott, former representative of a High Arctic riding in Nunavut's legislature.

Food has always cost more in the North, due to the expense of shipping it in from other parts of Canada, the region's relatively small and dispersed population, and the distance from major transportation hubs.

The federal government used to subsidize shipping costs through the old Food Mail program in an effort to make food more affordable.

First Air, an airline owned since 1990 by the Inuit people of Quebec through Makivik Corp., had a contract with Canada Post to deliver groceries to Nunavut communities at set rates. That meant under Food Mail, retailers had to rely on airlines chosen by Canada Post to get the subsidized freight rate.

But in 2011, the Conservatives replaced Food Mail with Nutrition North, which shifted the subsidy to retailers, who in turn were expected to pass it on by cutting food costs for consumers.



A price tag lists the price and subsidy of a four-litre jug of milk at a grocery store in Iqaluit, Nunavut on Dec. 8, 2014.
SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ron Elliott, who used to represent a High Arctic riding in Nunavut's legislature, said people are skeptical that businesses are actually passing on the full subsidy to customers.

Aboriginal Affairs has not required merchants to report their profit margins, which over time would indicate whether the full subsidy is being passed on. Ferguson's report said such

a measure would help quell skepticism about whether consumers are actually getting the full benefit of the subsidy.

The department now says that as of April 1, retailers will have to provide information on their profit margins.

Nutrition North gives retailers a subsidy based on the weight of eligible foods shipped to eligible communities. But

the auditor general found Aboriginal Affairs did not choose eligible communities based on need.

To highlight the problem, Ferguson's team pointed to two remote communities in northern Ontario, both about the same distance to the nearest town and lacking year-round road access. One is eligible for a subsidy of \$1.60 a kilogram; the

In detail

Food has always cost more in the North, due to the expense of shipping it in.

- The federal government used to subsidize shipping costs through the old Food Mail program.
- Under Food Mail, retailers had to rely on airlines chosen by Canada Post to get the subsidized freight rate.
- But in 2011, the Conservatives replaced Food Mail with Nutrition North, which shifted the subsidy to retailers, who in turn were expected to pass it on by cutting food costs for consumers.
- Many are skeptical that businesses are actually passing on the full subsidy.

other only five cents a kilogram.

The audit found that the department chose communities based on two factors: whether they had year-round road access and if they had used the old Food Mail program. Communities that made very little use of Food Mail are eligible for only a partial subsidy of five cents per kilogram, while places that did not use food mail aren't eligible.

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Aiden Chi is seen in the food court area of the University of Calgary's MacEwan Hall. Chi has turned to crowd-funding to raise some of his tuition amid fears he'll be forced to return to his native South Korea and serve in the country's military. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO IN CALGARY

Calgary student fears forced return to Korea

'Really scary.'
International tuition three times that charged for Canadian students

JEREMY NOLAIS
Metro in Calgary

Aiden Chi is a proud Canadian, regardless of whether he's officially recognized as such.

The 20-year-old's parents moved him from his native South Korea seven years ago in hopes that he would learn English, get a good job and start a family of his own.

They were never able to obtain proper citizenship, but Chi managed to enrol as an international student in the University of Calgary's business program and now is in his

second year.

Extending his work visa depends on him continuing his studies, but he faces a roadblock to the tune of \$30,000 to get through his third year.

Adding to the Chis' stress of being forced to return to Korea is that every man aged 20 or older is required to serve two years in the country's military.

"It's actually really scary," he said. "I don't want to leave anything behind, all of my work and everything. It feels like everything I did here will be for nothing."

Chi's parents had been supporting him through the first half of his degree but can no longer afford to do so.

The university, meanwhile, maintains that international students pay the true cost of tuition — \$1,833.84 per course, according to the school's website — whereas Canadian stu-

Fundraising

For a link to Aiden Chi's fundraising page, head to metronews.ca/calgary

dents pay a subsidized rate — \$538.59 per course — based on taxes paid to Revenue Canada.

Chi said he fears not having enough time to raise the needed funds to keep his spot at the school. He's now launched a crowd-funding page in hopes of raising \$30,000. To date, about \$1,100 has been contributed.

"When I'm in school I can't really work a lot," he said. "It's not a lot of time to raise tens of thousands of dollars ... if I go back to Korea I'll be forced to speak Korean ... the whole point of coming to Canada was to learn English and if I go back I won't have the chance."

RCMP. Mounties recommend charges after man allegedly strikes boy, flees

RCMP are recommending charges against a man who they say struck a three-year-old boy in the face and abandoned him at a bus stop in Surrey, B.C.

Staff Sgt. Joe Johal says police are recommending charges of assault and child abandonment. Johal says the man is a Surrey resident who is related to the child but would not confirm he is the boy's father.

The man has been released from custody with conditions and a court appearance is scheduled, something B.C. police have the power to do pending Crown approval of charges.

Johal thanked witnesses

Identification

Johal said police were able to identify the man and get him in custody in a few hours.

who contacted police on Saturday morning about the incident as well as those who circulated a photo of the boy on social media.

Callers reported the boy was struck in the face and pushed by a man who then got on a bus, leaving the boy behind.

"A lot of people called and (there were) a lot of tips, and

even the arrest that took place was due to a tip from a citizen who observed and called us," said Johal in an interview on Sunday.

The boy has since been reunited with his mother. The Ministry of Children and Family Development was involved Saturday and will keep the file open, said Johal.

Lucy Ingram, an employee at nearby Berezan Liquor Store, said she brought the boy inside the store after a customer told her he had been left at the stop.

The investigation continues and no names have been released yet. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

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Washington. U.S. reviews North Korea's terror status

President Barack Obama says the United States is reviewing whether to put North Korea back on its list of state sponsors of terrorism as Washington decides how to respond to what he calls an "act of cybervandalism," not one of war, against a movie company.

Sony Pictures Entertainment said it cancelled the theatrical release of *The Interview* after distributors refused to show it. The comedy involves a plot to assassinate North Korea's leader.

David Boies, a Sony lawyer, said *The Interview* is "going to be distributed, and what Sony has been trying to do is to get the picture out to the public," while protecting the rights of company employers and moviegoers. Boies said theatres "quite understandably" decided not to show the film as scheduled because of the threats. "You can't release a movie unless you have a distribution channel," he said.

North Korea has denied hacking the studio, and on



President Barack Obama.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Saturday proposed a joint investigation with the U.S. to determine the true culprit. The White House rejected the idea and said it was confident North Korea was responsible.

Obama is promising to respond. "We're not going to be intimidated by some cyberhackers," he said.

The president said the U.S. would examine the facts to determine whether North Korea should land back on the terrorism sponsors list.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pakistan. Arrests made in Taliban school carnage

Authorities made several arrests in the case of the Taliban school attack that killed 148 in the northwestern city of Peshawar, on Sunday, officials said.

"Quite a few suspects who were facilitators in one way or the other have been taken into custody," Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said, adding that the interrogations were "moving ahead in a positive manner." He did not disclose their identities or say how many they were.

Seven Taliban gunmen

wearing explosives belts stunned the world on Tuesday by storming into the military run school and slaughtering 148 people, including 132 students. Another nearly 121 students were wounded in the ensuing eight-hour siege of the school, located in an area where many military families live.

The group claims it fights to establish a ruling system based on its own harsh brand of Islam. It has killed thousands over nearly a decade.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

N.Y. cop killer had a criminal history

Brooklyn. Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu were gunned down at close range in their patrol car



New York City Police Commissioner Bill Bratton leaves flowers at an impromptu memorial near the site where two police officers were killed in the Brooklyn borough of New York, Sunday. SETH WENIG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The gunman who fatally ambushed two police officers in their squad car had a long criminal record, a hatred for police and the government, and an apparent history of mental instability that included an attempt to hang himself a year ago, authorities said Sunday.

Moments before opening fire, Ismaaiyl Brinsley approached people on the street in Brooklyn and asked them to follow him on Instagram, then told them, "Watch what I'm going to do," Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce said.

A portrait of the Brooklyn-born gunman emerged as big-city police departments and union leaders around the U.S. warned officers to change their routines and insist on extra backup a day after Brinsley carried out what he portrayed online as retaliation for the slayings of black men at the hands of white police officers.

Brinsley was black; the slain officers were Asian and Hispanic.

The slayings come at a tense time. Police nationwide have been criticized for months for their tactics, following Eric Garner's death in a New York officer's chokehold and Michael Brown's fatal shooting in Ferguson, Missouri. Protests erupted in recent weeks after

grand juries declined to charge the white officers involved.

Investigators were trying to determine if Brinsley had taken part in any protests over the deaths of Brown and Garner, whose names he invoked in his online threat, or simply latched on to the cause for the final act in a violent rampage.

They said he travelled frequently between the South and New York, where he fathered a

child in Brooklyn, and had been in the city earlier in the week.

Brinsley, 28, had at least 19 arrests in Georgia and Ohio, spent two years in prison for gun possession and had a troubled childhood so violent that his mother was afraid of him, police said.

On Saturday afternoon, Brinsley approached a squad car from behind in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighbour-

hood and fired four shots, killing Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu. He then ran into a subway station and committed suicide.

Hours earlier, Brinsley had shot and wounded his ex-girlfriend at her home outside Baltimore, then made threatening posts online, including a vow to put "wings on pigs" and references to the Brown and Garner cases. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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In this Sunday, May 11, 2014, file photo, a soldier and government officials inspect the bridge that links Nigeria and Cameroon after an attack by Islamic militants. JOSSY OLA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Boko Haram stages cross-border attacks and recruitment

Nigeria's Islamic extremists. Nigeria's neighbours worry about Boko Haram's threat to neighbouring countries

Thousands of members of Nigeria's home-grown Islamic extremist Boko Haram group strike across the border in Cameroon, with co-ordinated attacks on border towns, a troop convoy and a major barracks.

Farther north, Boko Haram employs recruits from Chad to enforce its control in northeastern Nigerian towns and cities.

In Niger, the government has declared a "humanitarian crisis" and appealed for international aid to help tens of thousands of Nigerian refugees driven from their homes by the

insurgency.

These recent events show how neighbouring countries are being drawn increasingly into Nigeria's Islamic uprising. Thousands of people have been killed in Nigeria's five-year insurgency and some 1.6 million people driven from their homes.

"We are concerned about the increasing regionalization of Boko Haram," said Comfort Ero, Africa director for the International Crisis Group.

On Sunday, Cameroon's army announced it had broken up a Boko Haram training camp in the Mayo-Danay district in the country's north.

Ero cautioned that co-operation between the neighbouring countries is weak. She said there is also distrust of the capabilities of Nigeria's once-proud military, which has been battered by Boko Haram.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boko Haram

Video shows civilians being killed

A new video from Nigeria's home-grown Boko Haram extremists shows gunmen mowing down civilians lying face-down in a dorm, and a leader saying they are being killed because they are "infidels." There are so many corpses the gunmen have difficulty stepping to reach bodies still twitching. Most appear to be adult men.

"From now, killing, slaughtering, destructions and bombing will be our religious duty," the group leader says in a message.

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Credit card fraud. Toronto man ordered to pay \$1.5M

It took nearly eight years from the time a Toronto man was arrested in a massive credit card fraud scheme, but a U.S. federal judge has figured out how much each victim is owed.

Prosecutors described the man's massive credit-card fraud scheme as high-tech bank robbery — stealing the identities of 38,000 people in order to bilk dozens of banks. So when he was convicted of mail fraud in February 2011, the U.S. government began the arduous task of figuring out just how much each victim was owed.

Years later, following the government's petition to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, a federal judge ordered Adekunle Adetiloye to pay about \$1.5 million US in restitution and forfeiture. Adetiloye is

Quoted

"A lot of the people didn't have money directly stolen from them. It was all the banks that had lost money ... People were out a lot emotionally, but you can't compensate for that."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Nick Chase

appealing the Dec. 8 judgment.

What isn't clear, is whether anyone will see the restitution payments, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Nick Chase.

Adetiloye's 18-year prison sentence, issued in January 2012, capped a lengthy international investigation into fake debt-collection agencies.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saudi Arabia. Low oil prices not a 'conspiracy'

Saudi Arabia's oil chief on Sunday dismissed allegations that his kingdom conspired to bring down oil prices in order to harm other countries and told a summit of Arab energy leaders that he was confident the market would stabilize.

The kingdom, which is dependent on oil revenues, is able to weather lower oil prices due to large reserves built up over the years. Non-OPEC member Russia and other nations like Iraq, Iran and Venezuela need prices substantially above

present levels to meet budget goals and want to drive prices up.

Saudi Arabia maintains it is opposed to cutting production because of fears its market share could erode.

"The best thing for everybody is to let the most efficient produce," Saudi Petroleum Minister Ali Naimi said in the United Arab Emirates capital of Abu Dhabi. The price of U.S. crude has dipped below \$60 US a barrel, its lowest in five years.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Luxury retailers head north of 49th parallel

Shopping. The entrance of high-end American department store chains have got Canadian rivals on the defensive

With the arrival of Nordstrom north of the border in Calgary and Saks Fifth Avenue waiting in the wings, the U.S. department stores are joining an increasingly crowded field of players banking on Canadian fans of high-end goods to spread the love — and wealth — to their shops.

Homegrown brands are bracing for the influx of fresh competition by shoring up or bolstering their operations.

Luxury menswear retailer Harry Rosen has enlarged four of its existing locations and has three major stores opening in 2015, said chairman and CEO Larry Rosen.

"It became obvious to us two, three, four years ago there was going to be an American invasion in our segment of retail, that a number of department stores were going to come here, and we obviously sat back to develop a strategy," Rosen said in an interview.

"When we sat back and we thought about it, we realized that we could turn



Canada's retail market has gotten a lot more competitive with the entrance of U.S. retailers, like Saks. RICHARD DREW/THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

an increasingly competitive situation into a positive — into a competitive strength."

With Holt Renfrew poised to open new locations and expand existing major stores in the coming years and Quebec-based retailer Simons readying to launch in cities across the country beginning in 2015, Canadian consumers will be rich for choice with the imminent boom in luxury offerings. Yet with so many locations selling upscale, big-ticket items, will homegrown shoppers be able to shell out enough to support

all of the competing players?

Ernst & Young partner Daniel Baer said what distinguishes many of the high-end retailers entering the marketplace is that they're concentrated in major urban centres like Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal and are opening limited stores in those cities.

"They're relatively targeted where there are people that have disposable income and where there is, as well, the ability to attract tourist dollars," said Baer, who also serves as national retail and

Canadian sensibility

Brynn Winegard, a marketing expert with Winegard & Company, says Canadians tend to be more value-conscious and less price-sensitive than Americans.

- "We are a lot more accepting of higher prices if we believe the value is there. And our economy is one that is padded enough that our consumers, our people, stay fairly affluent through the business cycle," she said.

consumer products industry leader for Ernst & Young.

"I think there will be the right balance in those marketplaces. Where it will become a little more interesting in my mind is when you're competing with a lot more stores in that aspirational upper middle class, because in that tranche, they are looking at a lot more stores, in fact, he added.

"That's where I think the competition will be especially fierce: the Nordstrom Rack, hr2 of Holt Renfrew fame, the (Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5th) — that category."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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BlackBerry attempts comeback

BlackBerry is hoping not only to return to the hearts and minds of smartphone users but also, starting next year, to get into their cars and homes, too.

With its finances slowly improving, plans are being made for the Waterloo, Ont.-based company to become a bigger player in the Internet of Things movement, which links your phone with various other technology, from your fridge to your television.

The project has been in development for several years at BlackBerry, and chief executive John Chen said Friday that a "roadmap" for his plans will be laid out in early January at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

"Our focus right now is on connected cars, and it will get into connected homes —

On the upswing

45%

Shares of the company have climbed more than 45 per cent in 2014, closing at \$11.55 on the Toronto Stock Exchange in late December, after starting the year at \$7.90

these things are inseparable," Chen said during a recent meeting with reporters at the company's headquarters.

"Everything we do fits together."

Still in its infancy, the connected home is the next evolution in technology as more people link their smartwatches with their laptops, and their phones to their bluetooth speakers.

BlackBerry is trying to get ahead of the curve by developing security software

that can be licensed to companies that want their products ready for the growing popularity of machine-to-machine communication.

Coming up with innovative ideas would've been almost unheard of a year ago when the future of BlackBerry was tenuous, at best. The company was drowning in problems and its finances were declining at an alarming speed, with quarterly losses that soared into the billions.

When Chen swooped into the leadership role in late 2013 he immediately launched a rescue effort, a strategy that has partly relied on thinking of new ways to sell the company's older technology, while it worked behind the scenes on fresh ideas.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

VOICES

THE YEAR THE CONVERSATION CHANGED

Thank you, 2014, for redefining how we talk about sexual assault and violence against women



STEPHEN KIMBER
halifax@metronews.ca

I followed last week's news stories about Dalhousie dental school with a mixture of oh-no shock and not-again recognition.

The week began with revelations about a misnamed, misogynous Facebook group: "The Class of DDS 2015 Gentlemen." Thirteen male graduating dental students had shared anti-women screeds, voted on which female classmate they'd most like to "hate f—k" and discussed the merits of chloroform to rape women. Followed by:

- News a dental school professor had shown a video of bikini-clad women to wake

up his male students during an early morning class.

- Reports that some women had complained about the school's toxic atmosphere last summer.
- Dalhousie's decision to try restorative justice.
- Reports at least one woman singled out on Facebook hadn't been consulted and wasn't keen
- Public outrage, campus protests, online petitions, alumni threats.

But would such stories have led our newscasts 20 years ago? Dominated our water cooler discussions 10 years ago?

Something significant changed in 2014. Start with Jian Ghomeshi, the disgraced

CBC radio host who tried to steer us into a discussion on the merits of "rough sex," but ended up derailed by the reality of his own choking, face-punching, rib-breaking, hate-f—king behaviour.

Still, Ghomeshi kick-started overdue discussions around consent and sexual and workplace harassment, even spawning conversations about how federal MPs should deal with more-widespread-than-we-knew harassment in their own workplace.

Ghomeshi wasn't the only bad actor who helped change our conversation. Bill Cosby, Ray Rice, Slava Voynov, Saint Mary's University football players and frosh leaders forced us to re-examine everything from the responsibilities of professional sports teams and public institutions to our own memories

of once-treasured icons.

Rehtaeh Parsons, the Cole Harbour teenager whose death pried open dark netherworlds of cyberbullying and online sexual images, bequeathed us new laws and an ongoing debate about appropriate roles for schools, parents, mental health professionals, police, courts, laws.

Yes, 2014 was The Year The Conversation Changed. About gender, sex, private, public, personal, political...

That's good. But we need to be cautious. As the unravelled gang rape story in Rolling Stone showed, life is more complicated than a Facebook post, or even a magazine story.

The goal is change. Change is hard — which is why these conversations are so important. Thank you, 2014.

Your Halifax



Window into a magical world

It's the most wonderful time of the year, isn't it?
A young girl looks into the holiday display at Mills on Spring Garden Road, in downtown Halifax this month. **JEFF HARPER/METRO**

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Send us high-resolution snaps of your city to readers@metronews.ca

Upcoming

No New Year's Eve plans yet? Not a problem

It's never too early to think about what to do on New Year's Eve, and the City of Halifax is again offering a free concert and fireworks to ring in 2015. The lineup for the Dec. 31 event at Grand Parade is headlined by Grammy Award-winning and internationally acclaimed violinist Miri Ben-Ari, who has worked with such music stars as Jay-Z, Alicia Keys and Armin Van Buuren. Also taking to the stage the local group Party Boots, Carson Downey, Atlantic Cirque and a DJ set by Neon Dreams. The free event, which isn't being shown on TV this year, begins at 10:30 p.m., with the fireworks happening at midnight.

METRO

Christmas trees not the only kind being trimmed this season

It's not just Christmas trees being maintained this time of year. Halifax is again in the midst of its winter tree pruning, and on Monday and Tuesday, will be working on Inglis Street, between South Park and Bland. The city said last year hundreds of tree lining 10 kilometres of roadway were trimmed as part of a preventative maintenance program.

METRO



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Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE
ON THE WORLD
OF CELEBRITIES



Iggy Azalea ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Hackers threaten exposé if Azalea doesn't end Banks feud

We're apparently officially in the age of hacker demands, as those loveable upstarts in Anonymous — the ones with the Guy Fawkes masks and all — have jumped into Iggy Azalea's feud with Azalea Banks, demanding that Azalea make a big public apology to Banks and the #ICantBreathe protesters or suffer the consequences.

Just what consequences, you might ask?

The group claims to have a sex tape featuring the singer and are threatening to release stills from it if she does not comply. Way to raise the debate, guys.

They went on to threaten, "We have so much s— on you, your scandal would be bigger than Bill Cosby's," which seems kind

of impossible just purely on a fame level. Unless there's millions of people out there who think of Azalea as a paragon of wholesomeness and morality that I don't know about.

Last week, Azalea launched a new volley in her ongoing feud with Banks, calling her "a bigot" and "a miserable, angry human being" on Twitter. Fun times.

It's another daughter for Kristen and Dax and yet another unusual baby name

Kristen Bell and Dax Shepard named their first daughter-

ter, Lincoln, after Shepard's favourite car, so now that their second daughter has arrived we all have a pretty good idea what Bell's favourite airline is. Or maybe they're just big Designing Women fans? The happy couple welcomed daughter Delta Bell Shepard to the world

last week. Bell announced the news via Twitter along with a warning to her husband about her estrogen levels and a photo of a gorilla holding a baby gorilla's hand.

We also would've accepted a photo of a sloth. The couple's first daughter was born in 2013, and they were married the same year shortly after California's Proposition 8, banning same-sex marriage, was struck down.

Dax Shepard and Kristen Bell

From Ross to a Kardashian! Schwimmer returns to TV

Would you believe that Friends star David Schwimmer hasn't had a TV project since the hit sitcom ended 10 years ago? I mean, sure he's done guest spots on 30 Rock and Lisa Kudrow's Web Therapy, but a regular gig? Nope. So what could lure Schwimmer, who's been sticking to film as an actor and a director, back to TV? Apparently the chance to play Kim Kardashian's dad. Schwimmer has signed on to play Robert Kardashian in Ryan Murphy's miniseries about the O.J. Simpson trial,



David Schwimmer

American Crime Story. So welcome back, Dave.

Elton steals Bass' thunder

So! Former 'NSYNC member Lance Bass got hitched this weekend, marrying Michael Turchin at a lovely ceremony in Los Angeles attended by every member of his boy band except Justin Timberlake. It was a very big to-do, so Bass must be pretty peeved that, across the pond, Elton John had his own wedding the very next day, marrying longtime partner David Furnish. The couple

did the whole civil union thing back in 2005, but now that full gay marriage is legal in the U.K., they decided to make it extra official. "We'll do it very quietly," he told Matt Lauer earlier this year of the wedding plans. Not quietly enough for Bass, though. Heck, John even created an Instagram account just to make a big deal out of the wedding. But maybe that's how he does quiet.



Elton John



Lance Bass

Life not so Marvel-ous for oh-so-grown-up Corden

Into the Woods star James Corden is one busy man. While he already has a thriving film, television and theatre career — and a young family at home — he's also taking over for Craig Ferguson at The Late Late Show next year. So he obviously doesn't have time consider a role in one of Marvel's big superhero movies. Which is fine, since he wouldn't want one, anyway. "I don't think I'm talking myself out of a big Marvel franchise," he tells Metro. "If you're an actor and you're in those movies, what is your day's acting? I find it strange."

Also, for any grown-up fans of Marvel movies, Corden thinks you need to grow up. "I spend almost no time

thinking about The Avengers. I literally could not spend less of my day thinking about it, and I'm constantly amazed by the volume of adults who do," he says. "Each to their own, and I wish them well, but I mean, it's preposterous."

James Corden



Franco my dear, The Interview is worth a damn

Review. Ballsy James Franco's killer instincts carry mockingly good flick yanked by Sony

MATT PRIGGE
Metro in New York

Yes, there have been terrorist threats over a Seth Rogen movie with a Guinness-level number of anus jokes. The Interview — a very filthy comedy about the attempted assassination of North Korean despot Kim Jong-un — has had its release cancelled for fears of threats on theatres showing it — a lot of brouhaha over a very silly film, one with a peerlessly silly James Franco turn and lots and lots of Katy Perry. As satires go, this isn't Dr. Strangelove, even if it ends in a ballsier cinematic act of war. It's a bunch of clowns seeing how far they can go in mocking the humourless, just to see what will happen. How could they have known the battle line was basically nonexistent?



James Franco and Seth Rogen in The Interview. CONTRIBUTED

The Interview isn't even the first movie to take out a North Korean leader. The world survived Team America, which turned a puppet Kim Jong-il into a cockroach. Here, his tyrannical, babyfaced son (Randall Park) becomes the target of CIA lust after he agrees to a chat with Franco's David Skylark, a lowest com-

mon denominator infotainment god. Before he and his producer, Aaron (Rogen, who also co-directed), leave for the dictatorship, they agree — without really fully understanding the gravity of their situation — to perform a covert form of poisoning.

The funny thing about North Korea — or sympathiz-

ers, or whatever the hell the rogue hacker team known as Guardians of Peace are — getting up in arms over The Interview is that Park's Kim winds up being unexpectedly semi-sympathetic. Meekly introducing himself to Franco's Skylark, Kim's a superfan who blurts out how nervous he is to meet one of his favourite

Review

The Interview

Directors. Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg

Stars. James Franco, Seth Rogen

TV stars. He can't hide his obsession with American junk culture, including reciting Perry's Wide Awake while in tears, or keep from detailing the mental abuse laid on him by his late father. He and Skylark bond over being despised by those who view them as dangerous for culture — and, in Kim's case, the human race.

There are more twists to come, some not so charitable toward its real-life monster. But The Interview grants Kim more humanity than the news ever has, all the while never holding back on exposing (well, mocking) the grim realities of life above South Korea. Everything's building

to a Frost/Nixon-style tête-à-tête that spills over into an outsized action climax. Rogen and company's glee in going really far is apparent; you can see them bowling over the first time they saw the crazy things they come up with materialize on-screen.

It's all a joke, if one that evidently doesn't go over well when described to humorless political leaders. And yet the funniest part isn't its cajones, or even that a film about idiots attempting a political killing is a dumb comedy that may have sparked an international incident. It's Franco. When he tries to be funny Franco's really, really funny. Skylark is a super-manchild, one caught in a cycle of child-like euphoria, insecurity and betrayal. His bromance with Kim Jong-un may be the most intense movie relationship of the year, and of course one that fiddles winkingly with the real-life questioning of the star's sexuality. The Interview isn't worth dying for, but more contraband needs someone calling John Kerry an "oak tree-looking f---."

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Ebooks

Wild

By. Cheryl Strayed

Kindle/iBooks/Kobo

• • • • •



Strayed's skillfully described account of her 2,663 mile wilderness trek along the Californian coast is a proper journey, full of interesting characters and self-made calamity, one that captures the adventurous landscape enough to transport you to her side. What begins as a dubious act of personal growth does indeed lead to a sophisticated and compelling life lesson by the journey's end.

App

Deck Charlie Brown's tree

My Charlie Brown Christmas Tree
iPhone/iPad/Android Free

Help Charlie Brown and friends decorate the little tree using ornaments, toppers, stands, and wraps inspired by the 1965 animated special. A holiday photo booth lets you share the results.



Video game



Name. Little Big Planet 3

For. PS3/PS4

Rated. Everyone

• • • • •

It's the new gadgets — a gun that fires teleporter bullets and a fan that pulls and blows structures — that introduce fresh possibilities and make this third outing a compelling challenge all over again. Hugh Laurie joins Stephen Fry to maintain the game's affable banter.

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A good time to smarten up

Money. With another year behind us, this is when you should take stock of your finances and fix whatever isn't working for you



GAIL VAZ-OXLADE
Gail blogs daily at gailvazoxlade.com

OK, it's December. Do you have plans to take what you learned this year and do it differently next year?

Y'know what they say: Stupid is doing the same thing over and over and expecting to get a different result. So are you planning to keep being stupid in 2015 or is next year the year you smarten up and take control?

It's so easy to ignore the details of our financial lives when everything is rushing past us like a sped-up movie scene. And while this month seems like the busiest of all, if you want next year to be a strong, healthy one financially, it's time to stop and take a breath.

What better time to check in on your financial progress than just before the turn of a new year? Although the glow of the holiday season may be bright enough to distract you from past mistakes, living in ignorance of what's worked, or what hasn't, is no way to get off to a fresh start. If you want to make sure you're in control of your money as you head into the new year, take these steps.

1. Do a net worth statement.

Assess how you feel about what you've accomplished financially this year. On a scale



Is consumer debt killing your budget? Then deal with it! ISTOCK

of 1 to 10 (10 being ecstatic), how do you feel about where you are? What's the biggest financial concern you have right now? What one thing do you want to accomplish before another year rolls past?

2. Review your budget.

How did the numbers shake out this year, and what should you tweak for next?

Often, as we progress through the year and get comfortable living on a budget, we also get complacent and costs start to rise.

Look at your last two months' spending to see if it is still in line with your planning. Is it time to do some trimming? Have prices risen

in some areas of your budget, indicating that you need to trim other areas to rebalance? Are there other changes that have taken place since you did your budget that you need to incorporate?

3. You don't have a budget? How's that working for you?

If you're sick and tired of not knowing where your money has been going, it's time to grab a cuppa, a calculator, six months' worth of credit card and bank statements and an Excel spreadsheet. (A pen and pad work, too.) Do the spending analysis. Make a budget.

4. Recalculate your debt level.

If your consumer credit pay-

Update your will

- Do you need to review your will this year? How about your powers of attorney for both personal care and money? And have you named a guardian for your children?

- Have you reviewed this documentation in the past

two years, or since your last major life change (marriage, divorce, moving, birth of a child)?

- If not, this is a good time to dig out the paperwork and have a look to see if it still meets your needs.

ments are eating up more than 15 per cent of your budget, you've got too much debt.

Some people find it's hard to even imagine being debt-free. But you can be. It may take another job to earn the extra money to get out of debt, but if that's what it takes, you can do it.

Are you on target to be debt-free?

5. Assess your emergency savings.

It takes small steps to get to where you want to be. Having six months' worth of savings for essential expenses socked away isn't a nice-to-have, it's a gotta-have.

6. Check your retirement plan.

Make sure you're taking advantage of a retirement plan at work and the savings-matching program it may offer. No plan at work? Then you better have an individual retirement savings plan.

Did you meet your savings goal this year? No? Answer me this: How will you eat when it comes time to hang up your work gloves? How will you keep a roof over your head?

If you think your kids are going to take care of you, how would you do right now if your mom and dad showed up on your doorstep?

7. Quantify your investment return.

How are you putting your money to work for you? Are those investment choices you made still working for you?

Are you well diversified? Diversification helps you weather investment volatility because all your money isn't tied up in one sector, type of investment or geographic location.

If your adviser hasn't reviewed your portfolio with you yet this year, get on the horn.

This would be a good time to adjust the investments that may have fallen out of whack with your goals and tolerance for risk.

8. Review your insurance coverage.

Do you have insurance for cars, property, life and disability? If you think insurance is a waste of money, how would you cope if the worst did happen?

How would your family cope? As if a life disaster isn't bad enough, would it be fair to them to be wiped out financially at the same time?

It's easy to put off looking at your money. Put it off. Put it off. Put it off. But you'll get no peace of mind from not knowing where you stand. Better to buckle down and do the detail.

Parenthood

Pregnancy affects dad's hormones, too

Fathers-to-be can experience a drop in two hormones — testosterone and estradiol — as their wives' pregnancies progress, according to a first-of-its-kind study at the University of Michigan.

Past research has indicated that fathers' testosterone drops after the birth of a baby, a finding consistent with other species in which males help care for offspring. AFP

Relationships. Women have greater partner empathy than men: study

It might not seem like news, but women exhibit considerably more empathy toward their partners than men do, according to a large-scale study at Griffith University and the University of Queensland in Australia.

When their partners succumbed to illness or experienced a traumatizing life event, women were noticeably affected, but the inverse

was not true, according to Dr. Cindy Mervin from Griffith and Prof. Paul Frijters from the University of Queensland.

"It is not that men are unemotional or uncaring, since they are quite strongly affected by what happens to themselves, but they simply are not very emotional when it comes to the feelings of their partner," says Mervin.

AFP



Women are more affected than men when their partners are suffering. AFP

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Work. Early-morning disco better than the gym to jump-start your day



Hundreds attend a dance party in downtown London. EDOUARD GUIHAIRE/AFP

At dawn, before commuting to his job in London's Canary Wharf business district, 26-year-old Nathaniel Hone joins hundreds of revellers at a dance party fuelled only by coffee and smoothies.

At the end of an alleyway in trendy Bethnal Green, a line of morning revellers is waiting patiently at the entrance of the Oval Space, a 6,000-square-foot venue with the feel of an old warehouse. Welcome to Morning Gloryville, an alcohol-free, all-ages disco.

"Morning Gloryville started a year and a half ago. We only had about 26 people at the first event," said co-founder Samantha Moyo, 26. "Now we're attracting 1,000 people per event, and we're in 16 cities all over the world," including Bangalore, New York, Paris and Tokyo.

Babies and children can party for free — provided the infants wear earmuffs against the pulsing club music.

Moyo describes it as "basically partying without drink and drugs."

Instead of beer or cocktails, the bar offers smoothies

such as the Incredible Hulk, a green concoction made of apple, banana, lemon, spinach and spirulina — an algae touted as a nutritious dietary supplement.

DJ Miles Metric, wearing a skin-tight hot pink outfit, is behind his turntables as the dancers begin to arrive.

Some are dressed in pyjamas, while others are in colourful outfits, carnival fashion or in fancy dress as tigers, bears and horses. One group wears sneakers, shorts and tank tops.

"Good morning! Are you ready?" one of the organizers shouts into the microphone. "Yes!" reply 100 enthusiastic voices, quickly drowned out by the blaring music.

Kaye, 35, wearing gold sequinned pants, neon pink shoes and rainbow butterfly wings on her back, admitted it was difficult to wake up at 6 a.m. to go dancing.

"Everybody's wearing fancy dress, it's colourful, we're having coffee, smoothies, we're having a good time," she said. "It made my day better already."

AFF

Teaching through the eyes of Homer, Bart, Lisa and Marge

Education. University professors are using The Simpsons in the classroom for courses on everything from literature to sociology

Bart and Lisa Simpson have been in elementary school for 25 years. But that hasn't stopped them from showing up on college campuses.

Universities across the country are using satirical references from The Simpsons to grab students' attention and convey lessons in literature and all manner of popular culture.

"If the references are important enough to be lampooned by The Simpsons, these works must be important cultural milestones," says Hofstra University adjunct English professor Richard Pioreck, who has been incorporating the denizens of Springfield into his courses for about a decade.

He currently teaches a course about the Broadway theatre and how The Simpsons have embraced various musicals and plays. Next semester, he shifts to an online literature course titled The D'oh of Homer, which includes readings from Edgar Allan Poe's The Raven and The Fall of the House of Usher, and Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol — all referenced in Simpsons episodes.

In recent years, other universities have had courses focused on the prime-time show, which celebrated its 25th anniversary last week. Those universities include Os-



Richard Pioreck uses The Simpsons in his English courses. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pop culture

"Teachers need to keep things fresh," says Denise DuVernay, an adjunct English professor at St. Xavier University in Chicago, co-author of the book *The Simpsons in the Classroom: Embiggening the Learning Experience with the Wisdom of Springfield*.



The Simpsons

"They need to reach students however they can. And using The Simpsons to grab their attention, I think, is brilliant," she says. "Fighting against pop culture isn't going to do anyone any good."

wego State University in New York and San Jose State University in California.

Longtime executive producer Al Jean says he's not surprised professors have embraced the program.

"Some people may think we are very vulgar, but then they find there is a lot of warmth and emotion and many people are surprised at the intelligence of some of the jokes," he says.

Pioreck says he decided to use the show after his daughter's friend passed an exam on The Devil and Daniel Webster by watching a Simpsons episode that focused on the story.

He found the sitcom usually aims for more than just the easy punchlines, with writers layering the plotlines with humour that can be appreciated by lowbrow, middlebrow and highbrow audiences alike.

For example, in one epi-

sode that parodied A Streetcar Named Desire (A Streetcar Named Marge), the dynamics of Homer and Marge Simpson's marriage are deftly illustrated through a comparison to the relationship of the couple in the play, Stella and Stanley.

"The Simpsons do a great deal of parodying, whether it's a complete script or a number here or there," Pioreck says. "Quite often, they choose family relationships; what makes a man a success is one of the things that we pursue. And you can see what happens to Homer. Even though it looks like he's not a good father, he steps up and he comes through in the end."

Jean acknowledges a theme in many episodes is the comparison of the Montgomery Burns character — the miserly owner of Springfield's nuclear power plant — to the lead character in the movie *Citizen Kane*, Charles Foster Kane.

"Mr. Burns ... he doesn't have fulfilment in his life even though he's the richest person in town," Pioreck says. "Here are two people who have it all, they have more money than they know what to do with and yet they're not happy. Homer has no money, but has friends and family."

Incredibly, at least one Hofstra student confesses she'd never seen the sitcom before signing up for the Simpsons-Broadway course.

Elizabeth Sarian, a 21-year-old music performance major, says she signed up because of her interest in Broadway, not the cartoon. Still, she says, the show "really does teach you a lot from watching it."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Use social media wisely to help land your dream job

Work. Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook can help you promote your skills and make valuable contacts in your chosen field

MARIANNE HAYES

Metro News in New York City

These days, it's hard to find someone who isn't on social media. It comes as no sur-

prise that a 2014 Pew study found 74 per cent of online adults use social networking sites. But are you leveraging social media to take your career to the next level?

According to a recent Jobvite survey of 2,000 recruiters, more than half said they'd reconsidered a candidate based on their social profile. And 94 per cent use LinkedIn to recruit employees.

So how can you best use social media to land the job of your dreams?

We asked Caity Kauffman, social media and digital

marketing manager for the Tampa Bay Lightning. At 25, Kauffman is living proof that understanding social media pays off. She used connections made on Twitter to secure her first job out of college. Since then, she's cultivated a loyal social media following and is considered an up-and-coming millennial voice in Tampa Bay.

Here are her tips.

Tweet your resumé

It may sound a little out there, but tweeting your resumé can be a great way to get expos-

ure. For Kauffman, doing this led to a job producing a Sirius XM radio show.

Watch what you post

When it comes to breaking into a new industry, be mindful of your tweets and status updates. Think of yourself as a business in the sense that you need to remember your audience. Kauffman recommends posting things that are related to the industry you want to be in.

"If you're posting about random things all the time, no one will see you as some-

one who's already in the business," she says. "Start acting like you're already in the business, even though you're not. A lot of times, people can't tell the difference."

Reach out to new contacts (without being creepy)

Got your eye on a potential new contact you're itching to connect with? The last thing you want to do is come on too strong, which can spoil the relationship before it even begins. Begin by following the person on social media, gradually commenting and

retweeting. This opens the door for some interaction.

Update your profile

LinkedIn is definitely the most-used social media platform when it comes to job searching. Kauffman really drives home the importance of making sure your profile is filled out all the time. Every time your job changes, make certain you update it with your full job description.

"I also accept (connection requests) from people I don't know if they're in my industry," says Kauffman.

One cut of meat, three unique flavours

Holiday Roasted Pork Tenderloin. If you have picky eaters at your table, here is a recipe with variations that will please everyone

Though delicious and tender, pork tenderloin also is neutral enough to pair wonderfully with numerous ingredients. It's also easy to cook.

Here are three versions: a tangy butternut squash pesto, a garlic-rich potato purée, and a glaze of cranberries and apple cider. Add some fresh bread and a salad and you've got a great holiday meal that you can repeat multiple times without ever feeling in a rut.

Holiday Roasted Pork Tenderloin

1. Heat the oven to 400 F.
2. Brush or rub olive oil over the surface of each pork tenderloin. Sprinkle each on all sides with salt and pepper. Place the tenderloins in a small roasting

pan and roast for 30 minutes, or until the centre of the tenderloins reaches 145 F. Slice and serve topped with one of the variations below.

Butternut Squash Pesto

In a food processor, pulse 2 cups of peeled and cubed butternut squash until the pieces are very finely diced. Stir 1/4 cup olive oil into the squash, then spread the mixture on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 400 F for 12 to 15 minutes, or until tender, but not mushy. Lift the foil off the pan and place the squash in the freezer to chill for 10 minutes. Once chilled, in a medium bowl stir together the squash, 2 tablespoons lime juice, 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro, 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil, 1/4 cup grated manchego cheese, and salt and black pepper, to taste. Spoon over the pork and top with toasted almonds.

Garlic Potato Purée

In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine 1 cup half-and-half with 3 garlic cloves and 2 bay leaves. Cover and simmer for 15 min-



Holiday Roasted Pork Tenderloin, shown here in its Garlic Potato Purée variation, serves 8. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

utes. Meanwhile, in a covered medium saucepan fitted with a steamer basket and filled with 1 inch of water, steam 2 pounds

of peeled and cubed russet potatoes for 15 minutes, or until very tender. Pass the potatoes through a food mill or ricer and

into a large bowl. Remove the bay leaves from the half-and-half and discard. In a blender, purée the half-and-half with the

Ingredients

- Two 1-lb pork tenderloins
- Olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper

garlic until completely smooth. Gradually whisk the half-and-half into the potatoes, allowing it to be absorbed before adding more. Whisk in 6 tablespoons butter, then season with salt and black pepper. Sprinkle with chopped fresh thyme, then serve alongside the pork.

Cranberry Cider Glaze

In a small saucepan over medium-high, combine 2 cups apple cider with 1 cup fresh cranberries. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, until thickened and reduced to 1 cup. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Meanwhile, in an oiled skillet over medium-high heat, cook several slices of prosciutto until crisp. When the pork tenderloin is cooked, serve covered with the glaze and garnished with shards of crisped prosciutto.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Photo: Peter Mather

They don't have a voice. We do.

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Learn more about CPAWS, or make your end-of-the-year donation at: WWW.CPAWS.ORG



Sweden's Jacob de la Rose gets the sandwich treatment from Team Canada's Frederik Gauthier, left, and Madison Bowey during an exhibition game in Ottawa on Sunday. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadians put the squeeze on Swedes

Tune-up match.

Canucks get five goals from five different players; McDavid returns from injury

Curtis Lazar doesn't need to score goals to make an impact.

Lazar didn't pick up a single point in Canada's 5-2 win over Sweden Sunday night in World Junior exhibition play, but there was no denying his impact.

The 19-year-old Lazar — the

Exhibition match

5	2
Canada	Sweden

oldest player on the roster by a matter of days — is on loan from the Ottawa Senators for the tournament. Having NHL experience means big things are expected from him both on and off the ice.

"After three months in the

NHL I think he's seen a lot and he's seen many older guys in the NHL doing certain things," said Canada's coach Benoit Groulx. "You can tell maturity speaks in his case."

Lazar joined the team late Friday, but Groulx says he has already made an impact.

"He's loud on the bench," said Groulx. "He likes to communicate with his teammates, likes to cheer for them, likes to tell them about positioning and stuff like that. It comes naturally for him, obviously, and a good hockey club needs that."

Canada looked good Sunday night, getting goals from five

different skaters.

Max Domi, Josh Morrissey, Anthony Duclair, Shea Theodore and Sam Reinhart scored for Canada while Eric Comrie made 17 saves.

Gustav Forsling and William Nylander had goals for Sweden, which got a 28-save performance from Samuel Ward.

The game also marked Connor McDavid's first taste of action since he suffered a broken bone in his right hand on Nov. 11. Playing alongside Lazar and Nick Ritchie, McDavid didn't score but he created a number of solid scoring chances.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBL Canada

Rainmen split weekend games

The Halifax Rainmen split their weekend, falling 98-97 to the Moncton Miracles at home Friday and edging the Saint John Mill Rats 106-104 on the road Saturday.

Joey Haywood and Emmanuel Jones led the Rainmen on Friday with 18 and 17 points, respectively, while Sefton Barrett put up 19 points Saturday for Halifax.

The Rainmen are now 6-5 on the season.

KRISTEN LIPSCOMBE/METRO

Boxing

Clayton wins first professional fight

Dartmouth boxer Custio Clayton came out of his first pro fight victorious.

Clayton, 27, claimed a unanimous decision over Sophyan Haoud of France in four rounds Friday at the WBC World Light Heavyweight Championship card in Quebec City, Que.

The six-time amateur national champion and 2012 Olympian fought in the light middleweight division.

KRISTEN LIPSCOMBE/METRO

Women's hockey

Jackson makes cut for U18 worlds

A Nova Scotian netminder will wear the maple leaf at the under-18 women's world championship.

Carly Jackson, 17, of Amherst has made the cut for the Canadian women's national U18 team that will defend gold Jan. 5-12 in Buffalo.

KRISTEN LIPSCOMBE/METRO

Moose share mixed emotions about big trade



Zachary Fucale CONTRIBUTED

Just like his longtime players, Halifax Mooseheads general manager Cam Russell has "mixed emotions" about mid-season trading.

The QMJHL franchise announced Friday that 2013 Memorial Cup champions Zachary Fucale and Matt Murphy have been moved to the Quebec Remparts.

"It's great for the two of those guys; they're going to the Memorial Cup again," Russell said of goaltender Fucale and defenceman Murphy, both 19,

Tweeted



"A lot of mixed feelings today. Can't thank the @HFXMooseheads and all the fans around enough for the past couple of years. Gonna miss it."

Matt Murphy, @Mpmurphy22

who will join this year's CHL championship host team for the remainder of the season.

"But at the same time, these are really tough trades to make, when you're trading

these type of players, these type of people."

Halifax is also giving up its fifth-round selection in the 2015 QMJHL entry draft, but in return receives 19-year-

old netminder Eric Brassard, along with rights to Quebec's first- and third-round picks in the 2016 draft, and first- and second-round selections in the 2018 draft.

Russell also confirmed that the Mooseheads will pick up 18-year-old defenceman Cody Donaghey, who has signed a three-year entry level deal with the NHL's Toronto Maple Leafs at this summer's draft, at which time they'll send back that 2018 second-round pick.

KRISTEN LIPSCOMBE/METRO

Steelers, Packers earn playoff spots

NFL. Pittsburgh, Green Bay among teams that will play for division titles in Week 17

The Pittsburgh Steelers and Green Bay Packers both qualified for the NFL playoffs with wins Sunday. Next week, they will play for division titles at home.

Dallas clinched the NFC East with a rout of Indianapolis, ending any chance for Philadelphia to make the post-season.

The Steelers (10-5) beat Kansas City 20-12 to secure at least a wild-card berth. They can win the AFC North by defeating Cincinnati next Sunday. The Bengals (9-4-1) host Denver (11-3) on Monday night.

"It was such a sense of urgency this week, knowing what was at stake. I just



Quarterback Ben Roethlisberger has led the Steelers back into the playoffs after a two-year absence.

GREGORY SHAMUS/GETTY IMAGES

thought we answered the challenge," said Pittsburgh defensive end Cam Heyward.

Green Bay topped Tampa Bay 20-3 and heads to Lambeau Field for next Sunday's showdown with Detroit for the NFC North crown. Both are 11-4 after the Lions won

20-14 at Chicago.

"We've won six out of seven games, so I'd like to classify that as playing a lot of solid football, that's for sure," said Packers coach Mike McCarthy.

With their wins in Week 16, the Falcons (6-9) and Panthers (6-8-1) set up a winner-take-all game for the NFC South next Sunday at Atlanta. Carolina beat Cleveland 17-13, and Atlanta defeated New Orleans 30-14.

Meanwhile, New England earned an AFC first-round bye with its 17-16 victory at the New York Jets. It will get home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs by beating Buffalo next week at home.

The Patriots are the first team since the current format was adopted in 1990 to get five straight first-round byes.

"I'm glad it came out the way it did — makes for a better Christmas," Tom Brady said. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**



Blackhawks blank Leafs

Maple Leafs defenceman Cody Franson pushes Blackhawk centre Jonathan Toews from the front of James Reimer's net on Sunday night at United Center in Chicago. Patrick Kane had a power-play goal and two assists, leading the Blackhawks to a 4-0 victory over Toronto. **BRIAN KERSEY/GETTY IMAGES**

NBA

Raptors ramp up before road trip

They're riding a league-best six-game winning streak, a franchise-best record for this point in the season, and sit atop the Eastern Conference standings.

The Toronto Raptors couldn't have done much more to cushion themselves for their first major test of the season — a gruelling trip west.

The Raps won their sixth in a row Sunday afternoon, beating the struggling New York Knicks 118-108 behind Kyle Lowry's 22 points and nine assists.

Then they rolled their suitcases out of the comfortable confines of the Air Canada Centre to board a flight to Chicago. Awaiting them: The Bulls, Los Angeles Clippers, Denver Nuggets, Portland Trail Blazers, Golden State Warriors and Phoenix Suns.

"I'm ready for it," coach Dwane Casey said of the looming road games. "I've been preaching it, and we should be ready for it."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries

March 21 - April 20

Colleagues and employers may need convincing that what you are planning is going to work but it won't bother you because you have self-belief. It'll be a great week for starting projects.

♉ Taurus

April 21 - May 21

You like surprises and that's just as well because they will be arriving every few minutes over the next couple of days. Be adventurous. Be outrageous.

♊ Gemini

May 22 - June 21

Keep your wits about you today or you could lose out financially. Someone you think is a friend is actually a secret rival, so don't don't accept what they tell you without checking it out first.

♋ Cancer

June 22 - July 23

This will be an interesting time and many strange things are likely to happen over the next few days. Chances are you will meet people who challenge your worldview.

♌ Leo

July 24 - Aug. 23

Break free of habits that hold you back from realizing your potential and today's new moon will help. Look at the big picture over the next 24 hours.

♍ Virgo

Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

This is one of the best times of the year for trying new things. Make the most of today's new moon to branch out creatively and do things you never have.

♎ Libra

Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

A personal issue that has been causing you problems will take a turn for the better. The most important thing is that you don't try to hang on to what is now moving out of your life.

♏ Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 22

Wherever you go and whatever you do today you will meet people who inspire you to be bigger and better. You will also, in your own small way, be an inspiration to others.

♐ Sagittarius

Nov. 23 - Dec. 21

Unexpected changes may unsettle you today but it won't be long before you regain your balance and find ways to make them pay.

♑ Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

Today's new moon in your sign makes this one of the very best times of the year, especially for creative endeavors and affairs of the heart. Tackle life head on.

♒ Aquarius

Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

Someone you are close to is likely to do something that shocks you but you should have seen it coming. Why not show how much they mean to you with unconditional support?

♓ Pisces

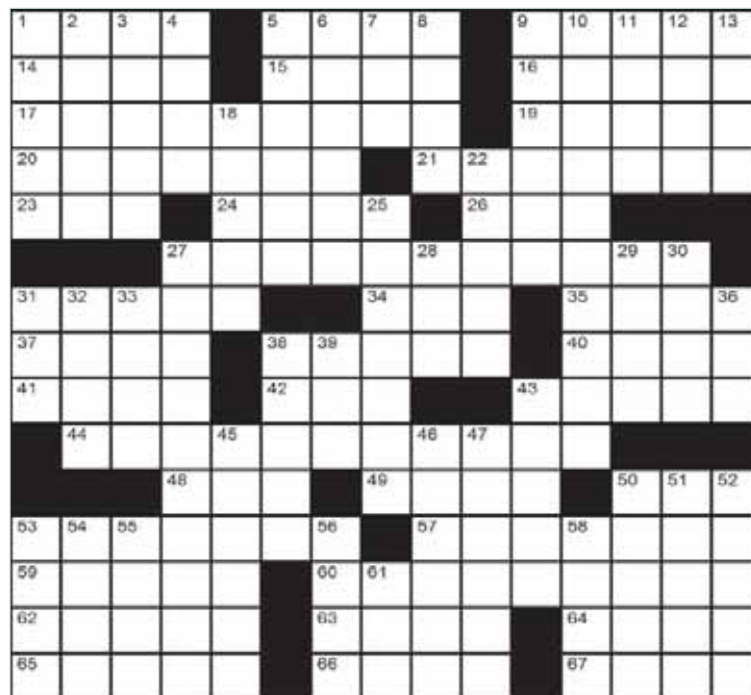
Feb. 20 - March 20

You will get the red carpet treatment wherever you go today. But you cannot possibly accept every invitation that comes your way, so be selective.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan

Across

1. "___ Christmas" by Wham!
5. Father-in-law for Esau
9. "We Three Kings of Orient Are" part: "___ of wonder..."
14. Noted volcano
15. Deviate
16. Elbow: French
17. 2008 Canadian short film starring Jonathan Torrens about Christmas foliage that retaliates
19. Bit ___ blood (Tension)
20. Festive decoration
21. Gongs
23. Select
24. Centimetre, e.g.
26. Celebrity's agt.
27. Manitoba: ___ Provincial Park
31. Handles on swords
34. Be in debt
35. Wash-and-___
37. In the blink ___ eye: 2 wds.
38. Like porridge bits
40. Mr. Foley
41. Ancient's 53
42. Drollness
43. Dancer Mr. Kelly's
44. As per #60-Across... Kevin's mom played by Canadian actress Catherine O'Hara, Kate ___
48. Green, for one
49. Max ___ (World



Chess Champion of 1935 to 1937)
50. Telly-watcher's network
53. Tropical destinations
57. Hanukkah candelabrum
59. Eye-related prefix
60. 1990 Christmas-time movie comedy starring Macaulay

Culkin: 2 wds.

62. Christmas tune: "Do You Hear What ___?"
63. Enthusiastic
64. Chop the veggies
65. "___ luck to ya!" (Hope ya win!)
66. French 'words'
67. Swill

Down

1. Free: 2 wds.
2. "It's ___!" (Crook-to-crook warning)
3. Hagar the Horrible's dog
4. Weight unit in China
5. More level or fair
6. Four-wheeled carriage
7. Association, briefly
8. Da's Russian opposite
9. Christmas tune: "___ Come, Emmanuel"
10. Skiing surface sort: 2 wds.
11. Big brass?
12. Eve's beloved
13. Wine hues
18. Jazz improvisations

22. Liv Tyler's 'Lord of the Rings' movies part
25. Terrier type, commonly
27. Visitor in Clement Clarke Moore's famous Christmas poem: 2 wds.
28. Sheep sort
29. Hollywood icon James
30. Conserve
31. Christmas, e.g.
32. "Let me know ___ in your way."
33. Secular
36. Home base, shortly
38. Baby barn bird
39. Garlic: French
43. Actress Ms. Davis
45. Northern Lights = ___ Borealis
46. Mountain's top
47. Some fabrics
50. Way to cook
51. Baccarat call
52. Little bird's sound
53. Churn
54. Lingering noise
55. Cooking fat
56. Pillow cover
58. Alberta town
61. Egg-related prefix

Friday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers



Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Friday's Sudoku



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